United Nations A/55/213/Add.1

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 September 2000
English
Original: Spanish

Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 114 (b)
Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Strengthening United Nations action in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation based on the principles of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Contents

Page

Replies received from Member States 2

Cuba 2

00-65698 (E) 290900 290900

Replies received from Member States

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[15 June 2000]

1. The Government of the Republic of Cuba attaches the utmost importance to respect for the principles of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity in international cooperation in the field of human rights.

2. For that reason, it considers itself duty-bound to denounce the situation prevailing in the work of the bodies and procedures of the United Nations machinery for the promotion and protection of human rights. Silence could make it complicit in the manipulation to which they are subject.

3. In recent years, there has been an increase in the political manipulation of the Commission on Human Rights and other intergovernmental bodies operating in the field of human rights by a small group of rich and powerful States of the North, which are attempting to impose their views and interests on developing countries, in other words, on the vast majority of humankind.

4. Those States are trying to impose a single political, economic, social and cultural model which will facilitate their domination of the countries of the Third World. Countries which do not conform are punished and demonized. One of the actions taken against them is the adoption of condemnatory resolutions, even if this entails resorting to the clumsiest and most contemptible forms of pressure and blackmail.

5. In the past 10 years, all the resolutions on countries adopted by the Commission on Human Rights and the Third Committee of the General Assembly have dealt with the situation of human rights in countries of the South, and they have been submitted almost exclusively by the countries of the North, primarily the former colonial or neocolonial Powers which remain "concerned" about their traditional spheres of influence.

6. In fact, throughout its more than 50 years of existence, the Commission on Human Rights has not once condemned a rich country of the industrialized North, even though more than one of them qualifies for a special procedure and for permanent monitoring by that body.

7. It would appear that human rights violations occur only in the South. The actions of Governments in the North would seem to enjoy complete immunity. The most appalling violations of the rights of minorities, migrant workers, indigenous populations and disadvantaged groups in the industrialized North are greeted with silence, and actions, policies and political institutions which are distinctly racist and xenophobic are permitted and justified.

8. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose staff perform such important tasks as supporting the work of the mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights, drafting the reports that are requested and providing technical advisory services to developing countries, does not have the equitable geographical composition to enable it to adequately represent the various cultures, societies, religions and legal, political and philosophical systems of the world.

9. Economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development, continue to be given less priority by the international community, as a result of the imposition of the hegemonic priorities and interests of a handful of developed countries. These rights remain the invisible part of human rights programmes. Priority is being given to the promotion and protection of the civil and political rights of bourgeois "liberal democracy" and attempts are being made to impose a single model of democracy.

10. Activities for the promotion of human rights and initiatives to promote technical cooperation and education in general are being given standing less priority and fewer resources by the developed countries, which prefer to take a punitive approach towards developing countries. A confrontational approach is being imposed and any real possibility of dialogue is receding.

11. Even more worrying are the attempts to legitimize the so-called "right of humanitarian intervention", which contravenes the general principles of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

12. While the resources which the developed countries allocate to official development assistance and other forms of international development

cooperation for the countries of the South are on the decline, the latter now face the threat of possible military intervention on "humanitarian" grounds. Bombs and rockets can only cause further disaster and greater poverty. The only humanitarian assistance that developing countries need is one which gives them access to the resources, technology and markets they need for their development.

13. The Government of the Republic of Cuba considers it its duty to combat these anomalies and to use every available forum to help alert all the Member States and the non-governmental community to the need to replace the current confrontational approach with genuine cooperation based on dialogue, as called for by the Charter of the United Nations.

14. The universality of human rights will become a reality only when the differences and defining characteristics of each human being and people are respected. Attempts to dominate and to impose the standards, values and interests of some elements simply serve to destabilize and discredit the entire international system for the promotion and protection of human rights.

15. Cuba reiterates its determination to contribute its best efforts to the ineluctable task of making the letter and the spirit of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action a reality, particularly the determination expressed therein to base the strengthening of international cooperation in the field of human rights on the principles of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity.